



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on July 2, 2019

## July 2 Is the Anniversary of American Independence

In a letter to his wife, Abigail, John Adams wrote that this day “will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be solemnized as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward and forever more.”



Adams was right in one regard. American independence has been celebrated since 1776 with parades, games, and fireworks, among other things. But we celebrate our nation’s independence on the *fourth* of July, rather than the *second*. It was actually on the second of July that the Continental Congress adopted the resolution of independence, marking the separation of the 13 colonies that now are the United States of America from the British Empire.

Richard Henry Lee, a member of one of Virginia’s greatest families (one cousin, “Light Horse Harry Lee” served as a general under George Washington and delivered the family eulogy that Washington was “first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen,” while that cousin’s son, Robert Edward Lee, was the famed Confederate general), introduced a resolution of independence on June 7, 1776.)

The Congress referred the resolution to a committee, then voted to pass it on July 2. It read, “Resolved: That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.”

With its passage, the United States of America was born.

The resolution had only passed after nearly a month of spirited debate and anxiety — after all, it was a huge step to secede from the mightiest nation on Earth, the British Empire. Its passage inspired Adams’ letter to his wife, and succeeding generations of Americans to celebrate what the Lee Resolution had accomplished: independence.

Americans do their celebrating on the *fourth*. No doubt one would get funny looks if he or she asked someone, “What are you doing for the Second?”

So, why was the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on the Fourth of July so important if independence was achieved on the second of July? What Lee had proposed was a mere resolution of independence. As important as that was, the Declaration of Independence gave the reasons for the separation, served as political propaganda to persuade undecided Americans, and above all, set forth the theory of government that set America apart not only from the British Empire, but all other nations of the world.



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While Thomas Jefferson is rightly credited as the author of the Declaration of Independence, John Adams and three others (including Benjamin Franklin) were part of a committee with Jefferson in crafting the formal Declaration of Independence.

Contrary to what many uneducated or mis-educated Americans think today, the Founders did *not* believe that they were establishing a democracy, where the will of the majority was to prevail on all matters. They did not believe that the purpose of government was to set up majority rule. Rather, the purpose of government was to protect every person's life, liberty and property (or as the Declaration puts it, *the pursuit of happiness*, which undoubtedly includes property).

They also did not believe government granted anyone any rights. The Declaration states quite unequivocally that our rights come from God, with government's purpose being restricted to securing those rights. If government gives rights, then government can simply take them away. Our rights do not rest upon the will of the majority, but are a gift from God.

According to the Declaration, governments derive their "just" powers from the consent of the governed. What is a just power? That would be any power in which government carries out its God-appointed purpose of making safe the rights of its citizens. It would not include what French philosopher Frederic Bastiat denounced as legal plunder — government taking property from one person in order to give to another person.

And, of course, the Declaration asserted the right of revolution, when government failed to secure the rights of the people. "Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends [of securing the people's rights], it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government."

In short, Lee's resolution declared the *what*, and Jefferson's Declaration explained the *why*.

Most importantly, *both* asserted America's status as an independent nation. In a time when globalist forces are working overtime to reduce our national sovereignty, our continued independence is clearly something to celebrate — whether we do it on July 2, July 4, or any other day of the year.

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